

Deceptive Hearts - Ananias and Sapphira: Acts 5:1-11

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Preacher: Scott Liddell

[0 : 00] I am grateful that you have come to worship the Lord this morning. Next week, I'm excited for our Christmas service. It's hard to imagine that next week will be our Christmas service, because we're still going to be yet six days away from Christmas day.

But it will be our first Sunday prior to Christmas, and so we look forward to hearing from the choir and singing much and praising the Lord together.

Today, we're going to continue our series in the book of Acts, and in the early church, there was much to be grateful for.

How wonderful it would have been to be in that early church. What spiritual vitality was rampant. What dynamic participation in the Holy Spirit was demonstrated. What phenomenal growth within one single generation, thousands of people are added to your church.

[1 : 03] Thousands within a few months, 15,000, 20,000. What great leaders who by proximity to Jesus Christ knew Christ when he was alive in the flesh.

What it must have been like to be with those men. What moral concern was demonstrated. What zeal to revamp the social setting of the Roman Empire.

What love for the brothers and sisters to share in material goods. It would have been amazing.

Today in our text though, this amazing setting is interrupted because now sin is recorded. It disrupts this amazing time that the early church was experiencing.

If you have your Bible with you, if you want to turn to Acts chapter 5, rather, we're going to read from verse 1 through 11.

[2 : 05] Acts chapter 5 verses 1 through 11. This is the word of the Lord. But a man named Ananias with his wife, Sapphira, sold a piece of property and with his wife's knowledge, he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles feet.

But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.

When Ananias heard this word, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. The young men arose from and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.

And after an interval of about three hours, his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter said to her, tell me, whether you sold the land for so much?

[3 : 20] She said, yes, for so much. But Peter said to her, how is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door and they will carry you out.

Immediately, she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came and they found her dead, they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard these things. Perhaps one of the most meaningful words in this whole entire text is the very first word, but.

Because the word is a word that denotes a contrast. And who is it? And last week we noted a contrast thanks to Pastor Jay that he and I are different, apparently.

He used the word whimsy. That is, he is delightfully playful and he likes things that are fanciful. And then he used the word, but Scott is not.

[4 : 29] And I don't always speak of myself in third person, but today I am. And this word, but, here at this first word of this chapter.

But is contrasting and an eyes in sapphire with someone. Yes, the whole church in general read with me in chapter 4 verse 32. Who are we contrasting ourselves with?

But the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul. And no one said anything of the things that belonged to him was his own. But they had everything in common.

And then we read specifically someone in particular, verse 36. So the whole church had these possessions and they were sharing with one another. There was great delight. Verse 36, though, named someone specifically, thus Joseph.

Who is also called by the apostles, Barnabas, which means son of encouragement. A Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles feet.

[5 : 36] But, and then we're introduced to Ananias and Sapphira. This word, but is contrasting Ananias and Sapphira to the whole, what the, what the spirit of God is doing in this early church and specifically with Barnabas.

What generosity there was that was being demonstrated, selling property, giving all the proceeds to the apostles for their faithful distribution to all who had need.

And Barnabas, we learned a few things. His given name by his parents was named Joseph. He was of the tribe of Levi. He was born on the foreign island of Cyprus and he sold a piece of land and he gave all the proceeds to the apostles.

This lavish generous gift. This gift was of such encouragement that the apostles gave him a nickname Barnabas, which meant son of encouragement.

And so what I find interesting is that his ministry became his moniker. I think of Ed and Joanne Underhill, who for this is their second year now are serving every single Sunday in the toddler room to allow young parents to go to a discipleship class at nine o'clock.

[6 : 50] They've been doing this faithfully for two years. And if their ministry were to become their moniker, perhaps we would call Ed and Joanne loyal servants.

We don't even call Ed and Joanne, Ed and Joanne. We just call them loyal servants. Thank you. And so just like that, Barnabas had this name given that just meant son of encouragement, but his ministry became his moniker.

If you had a moniker because of your ministry, what would it be? For Barnabas, he's a son of encouragement.

The early church in Barnabas specifically, they stood in contrast to Ananias and Sapphira. Barnabas was generous.

Ananias and Sapphira withheld. Barnabas with truthful. Ananias and Sapphira were deceitful. Barnabas was transparent. Ananias and Sapphira were hypocritical.

[7 : 43] And so that sets the setting of our text. Ananias and Sapphira stand in sharp contrast, and that first word, but, indicates such.

I look at Ananias and Sapphira and I think they are breaking the unity of this early church with their hypocrisy. And not only are they hypocritical, that is they led some in the church to believe one thing when they actually did another, but I call them determined hypocrites.

And so unity is threatened in any church by determined hypocrites. In fact, this is premeditated hypocrisy. He and his wife got together. They agreed that this was their story.

They were not even together when they were both questioned. When they had the same story and they both dropped dead. And so this was premeditated hypocrisy.

We're going to deliberately tell a lie to have people think one thing about us when we actually do another. So I want to share today some of the things that we in the church today need to be mindful of that we are maybe not all that together different from Ananias and Sapphira.

[9 : 06] For what is it that is threatened, unity is threatened by determined hypocrites? What do we find here in our text that they are spiritual posers?

So Ananias and Sapphira are spiritual posers. A poser is someone who acts in a manner to impress others. Jesus called out the Pharisees for this hypocrisy.

They wanted to be known and praised for by their righteous acts. Ananias and Sapphira exemplified this spirit of the Pharisees. And we too are terribly susceptible to this sin.

Ananias and Sapphira witnessed. I want to commend Ananias and Sapphira. I don't want to vilify them unduly because they do several things quite well.

Let me cite them. Ananias and Sapphira, they witnessed the church's generosity and perhaps that of Barnabas specifically. So can you imagine everyone just seems to be selling their possessions and they're giving to all who had need.

[10:12] There was just the spirit of generosity. And so Ananias and Sapphira want to participate in that. You can't fault them. I would too. We would all want to be a part of that.

So Ananias and Sapphira, they were moved and they wanted to contribute to the Lord's work. We can commend them for that. They were neither forced to sell their field.

They did that volitionally. They sold their field. Nor were they forced to give all the proceeds of the property sold. For example, look with me in verse four.

This is very important. Peter questioning Ananias, we find some truths here. While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own speaking of the property?

Ananias, Peter is saying to Ananias, listen Ananias, while that property remained unsold, was it not under your own authority? You didn't have to sell the property.

[11:08] You did it. And it was all under your authority. Second, look with me in verse four. And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal?

So even the entire proceeds of that was the property that was sold, was not all of it at your disposal to decide under your authority?

If you wanted to own, the implication is this, if you wanted to only give half of it to the apostles and keep half of it for yourself, that is completely permissible.

That is not the problem. So we need to commend these folks. They volitionally sold this property.

They wanted to contribute to the needs of the church, for the advancement of the gospel.

This is where and how we can commend Ananias and Sapphira. They wanted to contribute to the needs of the community.

[12:10] But what is the problem? They kept some of the proceeds claiming they gave it all. That's the problem.

And so they are there, therefore, spiritual, what I call, posers. They indeed, they did one thing, but in word, they claimed another.

On Sunday morning, we offer discipleship groups at nine o'clock. Today was the last one, and we will commence a new semester of classes beginning the second Sunday in January in the new year.

And I'm looking forward to those. In this discipleship hour, it is designed that we are to live into our mission statement. What are we trying to accomplish? We're trying to raise up disciples of Jesus Christ who are transformed by the word of God and the gospel for God's ultimate glory.

That's what we're trying to accomplish. The church is this disciple making factory. That is what we are designed to be, raising up ambassadors for Christ, raising up disciples for Christ.

[13:21] So it's okay to admit in those contexts, it's always okay, but especially in those contexts where you may hear something that you had never known or heard a word that you don't know to say, I don't know what that means.

I'll recount two things, quickly two stories. I have from time to time, almost weekly, the opportunity to meet with Dr. Vreeland and who has devoted himself to God's word and has studied much through his whole life.

And there is often, almost on a weekly basis, I have to say to him, I don't know what you're talking about. I don't understand.

And I appreciate that he is lovingly patient with me. And so too we should be with everyone. I remember early in my ministry years, I was on church staff, but I was without formal theological education.

And I remember someone, a fellow pastor in ministry, we were in ministry together, and he was at a different church. And he, I remember to this day, he asked me this question, Scott, hey, just tell me, what's your eschatological view?

[14:29] And I thought, eschatological, eschatological. No matter how many times I repeated that word in my mind, it was not coming to me. I recognized it as a formal theological term.

I recognized that I'd heard the word before, but I was bankrupt as to what it meant. And so I simply had to say to this person, I'm sorry, I don't know what that word means.

And then he just clarified, oh, I'm sorry, I was just asking what your view of the end times is. Oh, why did you say so?

But here's my point. As we all grow as disciples of Christ, we'll likely encounter things we don't understand.

We'll encounter perhaps words we never understood. And it's okay to say, excuse me, can you please define that word, or can you explain this to me?

[15 : 29] And I pray that you will be met with such charity. It's quite okay to say, I don't know if you don't know.

Opposer is someone who acts in a manner to impress others. God has called us to abide with him through primarily two means, the word of God and prayer.

You must be careful when we share with others what our quiet time looks like or what our devotional life looks like. I've heard some exaggerated stories from time to time, and it's 100% okay to state honestly what your time with the Lord looks like.

It's also okay to say, I don't know how to spend time with the Lord. Would you share with me?

Please do that. Let us not be spiritual posers.

And determine hypocrites are liars. Look with me in the text. First of all, they were in cahoots together in verse two.

[16 : 35] And with his wife's knowledge, he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought a part of it and laid it at the apostles feet. And Peter said in verse three, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?

And hypocrites are liars. It's interesting to know nothing in the text tells us how Peter knew Ananias was deceitful. But the Holy Spirit saturates this text and it is plausible that the Holy Spirit revealed it to him.

And Ananias lied about their charity. We lie to impress people. We fill out job applications and add a little embellishment here and untruth there.

We pride ourselves in our exaggerated past accomplishments. We lie to get revenge or to discredit others.

Someone hurts us. So we retell the story and perhaps in a gossip or a slander manner and we don't recount the situation rightly or fairly.

[17 : 42] And we embellish, we lie, and we unjustly discredit others. We lie to make a profit. We sell something that isn't worth that much of what we say it is.

So we will take advantage of the situation by covering up the truth. Oh yeah, that car, it runs great. Sometimes we lie because it is more convenient.

So we bluff our children seeking their compliance by empty threats. Children lie to escape punishment and that is not just true of children.

We don't want to be in trouble for surfing the web at work, looking at social media or whatnot. So one makes up a work related excuse as to why you spent so much time online.

Distortion is a subtle form of lying. You can tell the truth, but you are only telling the truthful parts of the story and we cover up the things that may not tell the whole story.

[18 : 51] So even when I'm telling the truth, you think well of me. Let me give you an example. All of what I'm about to say is true, which is true. It's bad when you have to clarify the truth.

On Sunday mornings I wake up at five o'clock. I arrive at the church at six o'clock. I spend some time in prayer. I look over the sermon for about an hour.

I often, if there's things not else going on, I'll attend the prayer meeting at eight o'clock and then I'll often go to a campus group and then I'll come to service.

And all of that you think wow, that's amazing. What I won't tell you, so all of that's true. So I'll tell you the truth to help maybe you think well of me.

And all of that is indeed true. What I won't tell you is I got frustrated because my paper didn't copy on the copy machine. And I had a little, in my heart about that.

[19 : 50] And I could go down the other parts of my morning that don't make me look very good, but I won't tell you that. No, I can't.

I'm not whimsy.

Exaggeration is one of the biggest forms of lying. Hyperbole isn't a sin. It is not wrong to say this suitcase weighs a ton because we all know that's a willful, deliberate exaggeration in what I really mean.

But I want us to be careful of using words like always or never. Be mindful how many times you use those words and ask the question is that true?

Listen to spouses argue and how often they utilize the word never or always. You never do anything to help. You always put me down. You never say anything kind.

[20 : 56] You never do anything good. You never help me with the kids. You always complain. You never think of me. And so it goes. Exaggeration.

It's lying. What is so bad about lying at deception is that it is so antithetical to who God is. God is truth. Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father, but through me. So any form of deceit or deception is so contrary to who the Lord is. Not only that, God is light.

James calls God the Father of lights. This is the message that you have heard from him and announced to you. This is in 1 John 1 5 that God is light.

And in him there is no shadow. There is no darkness at all. If I had a shoebox, imagine with me a shoebox.

[21 : 55] And it's dark inside the shoebox because the lid is on. And as soon as I opened the lid and light floods in, all of a sudden clarity is brought as to what is inside that shoebox.

All of a sudden I could see. And so it is with the Lord. God is light. And in him is no darkness at all. Through Scripture, God enlightens one's path and gives light to one's eyes. Light inherently reveals a lie conceals.

Deceit is contrary also to our new and redeemed nature. Prior to being saved, we are told that we are dead and our trespasses in sin. And in that state, the human heart suppresses the truth and unrighteousness.

But we have a new nature. Therefore if anyone is in crisis, a new creature, all things have been passed away, behold, all things have become new. Put off your old self, which belongs to the former manner of life that is corrupt through the deceitful desires, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds and put on the new self created in the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness, we're told.

[23 : 11] It's also sobering to think that Jesus died for a lie. Two ways. The serpent told Eve a lie of something that God did not say and the rest is history.

And Jesus died for that to redeem the sinful nature in man since that time. Second, Jesus died because people lied about him falsely when he was alive on this earth.

Deceit is raw historical revisionism. I hate historical revisionism. I want history to be told as it is. But even when you ask a simple question like, did you brush your teeth?

And a child says, yes, but it really is no. What did they just do? They made you try to think about a past event that didn't happen. Did you brush your teeth? Yes.

So they made you think about the history in one way when reality, it's a different way. No, you didn't brush your teeth.

[24 : 17] Let us not play into historical revisionism and tell the truth. Third, determined hypocrites are greedy. Look with me in verses two and three.

And with his wife's knowledge, he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and look in verse three halfway through. And Satan filled your heart to the light of the Holy Spirit to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds.

This word keep back part of the proceeds. It could mean something like to pilfer. And one other occasion that this word is used is with the account of Achan.

You may remember that account in the Old Testament, in the Greek Septuagint, that word is used. This keep back for himself to pilfer. What did Achan do?

The children of Israel were led out of the wilderness, back into the Promised Land for 40 years. They're entering the land. They're wanting to take conquest of the land that God had given them.

[25 : 17] The first stop across the river of Jordan, they encamped. And there's Jericho, this big walled city. They march around the city for a few times. They blow some horns. The walls fall, conquer.

Only Rahab is taken and brought into the encampment of Israel. God said to Israel, do not take anything from Jericho.

There are things that are designed for destruction, but only keep the gold, silver and bronze and those precious metals. And they are to go to the treasury of the Lord. That's what you were to take

out, but that's to go to the treasury of the Lord.

And Achan is one of those people who goes into Jericho and he does two things. He finds a cloak from Babylon that is beautiful from Sinai, Sychar.

And then he buries also in his tent 30 pieces of silver underneath that cloak that he buried. Of the things that God. So then the next town that they go to that they're to conquer is this little town of Ai.

[26 : 20] And they're supposed to go into that city and conquer it, but it's a little town. It's a little town and they only send instead of all these massive troops, they only send 3,000 troops.

And they were handily defeated and routed and it was a demoralizing defeat. And what the problem was is that, and so Moses or Joshua, that is, he says, what happened?

And God revealed that Achan had hidden these things that God had said not to, but he had taken some for himself. That's the point.

And this phrase is used. So in part there is some greed here in part with regard to Ananias. And so what's also similar about these two accounts is this.

What happened to Achan's life? Imagine this. God is doing a new thing. He is bringing his people into the promised land. They are conquering.

[27 : 21] They're going to make a conquest of this land that God has given them. And what happened? They took Ananias or Achan, sorry, they took Achan outside the camp with his children and as all of his animals and livestock, stoned him, killed him and burned their tent and all their possessions gone, erased from history.

No more. The line of Achan, no more. Done. And you think, wow, that's pretty severe. But God is doing a new thing. And so what's in the church, what is God doing?

He's doing a new thing. Here's this brand new thing. You think, man, this consequence is so severe. Yes, it is severe.

But God is doing this new thing. And he's saying, this greed, this determined hypocrites have no place in my church.

Fourthly, they're instruments of Satan.

[28 : 28] Verse three, but Peter said Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie? Oh, sorry.

Satan's instrument. Satan is called a liar and the father of lies.

Satan is the opposite of that which is true and holy. Satan comes to steal, kill and destroy. Satan continues to destroy today through the love of money, falsehood and hypocrisy.

Satan filled and the result was a lie. Satan wants to determine, undermine, that is, any community of God, including Fourth Memorial.

One way we can thwart Satan's attacks is to be honest before God and honest with one another. When integrity is compromised, destruction will follow.

[29 : 30] And Ananias was influenced by Satan and he remains accountable for his actions. And his determined hypocrites grieve the Holy Spirit, also found in verse three.

You've Satan filled your heart to lie, but to who? But to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads people into truth. So for Ananias and Sapphire to lie, they are going against the Holy Spirit.

They lied to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force. He is a member of the Godhead and he is grieved. We grieve the Holy Spirit when we do things that are contrary to his holy nature.

Look with me here on the screen in Ephesians four. Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only that which is good for the building up as fits for the occasion.

And that it may give grace to those who hear and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you are sealed for the day of redemption.

[30 : 36] Look at the word and I've highlighted it in the red. It links the imperative command that is don't let any unwholesome talk or corrupting talk come out of your mouths.

It links that command to not grieving the Holy Spirit. So it could read this way. Let no unwholesome word come out of your mouths and do not grieve the Holy Spirit.

The latter prohibition do not grieve the Holy Spirit serves as a motivation for the preceding advice about speech. The Holy Spirit of God who dwells within believers is a divine agent of reconciliation and unity in the body.

He is especially grieved when unwholesome speech is uttered by members against one another. I just want to conclude with a few observations and I'll close.

Then it's Sapphira's turn. Ananias was buried. He drops dead. He's buried and three hours later his wife comes in.

[31 : 39] And what is sad to me is Sapphira is more committed to her husband and the lie than the Lord. Boy, don't you, when Sapphira comes on the scene, don't you root for her?

Don't you want to say, Sapphira, tell the truth. Tell the truth. I don't care if your husband agreed to this to say this is your common answer.

Don't do that. Don't be more committed to your husband and to the lie than to your husband. But she falls. May this serve as a warning to those of us in authority, employers, supervisors, husbands, parents, pastors, elders.

May we never use our authority to lead others into sin. May we never use our influence to encourage others to sin.

When someone asks you to do something that is sinful, you have biblical grounds to honor the Lord over human authority. Yes, you may suffer consequences, but you will honor the Lord.

[32 : 47] And sadly, the first deaths recorded in the early church are those of two hypocrites.

There is someone who attends here at 4th, who is a member, who has a beautiful story of her employer asking her to falsify records so that that company could get more money from the government.

And she told her employer, I can't do that. I will no longer do that. The ending may be tragic, the ending may be sad, but I think this woman is so beautiful.

I'm grateful she chose to tell the truth at a cost. This story tells us what God thinks of spiritual hypocrisy.

This account of Ananias informs what God thinks about spiritual. Here's what I mean. Look with me in verse 3. You'll find the Holy Spirit. You lied to the Holy Spirit, the text says.

[33 : 53] Verse 4, you have not lied to man, but to God. There's the Father. And then in verse 9, how is it that you have grieved together to test the Spirit of the Lord?

There's the Son. Yes, they sinned against the Lord. Yes, they lied against God. But specifically, they lied also to all three members of the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

How is it? Ananias, Sophia's death are nothing less than divine judgment. It was sudden, it was terrible, and it was judicial.

Why was it so severe? If the sin of spiritual hypocrisy were dealt with directly and swiftly, the early church would go off mission entirely.

It would communicate to the church, God is only concerned about the externals, not the internals. And that's just like every other religion.

[34 : 58] But not so with our Lord. He is concerned with the truth being in the innermost parts of our being. He's concerned about our motives and the intents of our hearts, as well as our deeds.

Thirdly, another observation, we are guilty of spiritual hypocrisy. This is not a casual deception, rather Ananias feigned a deeper spiritual commitment than he had.

What is the Ananias's sin and Sophia's sin? It was not when others think that we are more spiritual than we are.

That is not the concern. In fact, I'll tell you what I don't like. I do not like these three steps. I don't like them.

Because something happens in people's perceptions of those who stand up here on this platform about who they are. Those who sing on the worship team, the commitments they have to the Lord.

[36 : 01] Sometimes it's interesting what three steps, maybe two feet, do to our hearts and understandings of those who are up here.

And sometimes we ascribe to people things that are not true of them, but that's not the sin. It is not what others may think.

It is not when others think we are more spiritual than we are. But here's the sin, but it's when we try to make others think we are more spiritual than we are. That's what Ananias and Sophia did.

That is what was terrible. So do we do this today, creating an impression that we are people of prayer when we are not, making it look like we have it all together when we do not, promoting the idea that we are generous when in reality we are so tight that we squeak when we smile.

And on this point, in a previous church context, there was a gentleman who by his own words, he was a multi-millionaire.

[37 : 07] And he would communicate how wealthy he was and communicate how generous he was. But if I won't get into the details, but what was so tragic is that the end of his life ended with him being in a lawsuit and losing everything.

And he died prematurely. Spiritual hypocrisy happens. Misrepresenting our spiritual effectiveness. When I may say, oh, I lead a small group in my home, when in reality I just take prayer requests and email everybody.

When a ministry leader, pastor, elder calls people to be holy, when in secret he is having an affair or views porn.

This should give us all things to think about if we dare. This should give us all something to think about. Practical steps.

[38 : 13] We need to take an honest look at our own lives regarding deceit. Are we truthful with people? Do we engage in exaggeration or coloring?

Are we promoting spiritual deception about our own commitments? Are we trying outwardly or subtly to make ourselves appear to be what we are not?

Perhaps to acquire some objectivity, if you are married, you could ask your spouse. And if you are single, ask a trusted friend.

If you play into spiritual hypocrisy in some way. And lay whatever the results of that conversation are before the Lord and confess whatever they may be.

And ask for forgiveness. And surrender to the Lord again, a heart and a mind to say, Lord, teach me and lead me into all truth.

[39 : 15] Last or second to last is this. The church experienced great fear. What's interesting about this passage is, remember, it's a contrast, the word but.

So let's look at the previous context in v. 4, verse 33. And with great power, the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

And with great grace was upon them all. Great power, great grace filled this church. And then they dropped dead. And after Ann and I dropped dead in v. 5.

And great fear came upon all those heard of it. And look with me in v. 11. And great fear after Sapphira dropped dead came upon all those in the church and upon all who heard these things. Great power, great grace, but also great fear.

[40 : 15] This great fear is this reverential awe, the reality of who God is. Fear is more than just mere respect. It is a healthy awareness that God is present and can act in judgment at any time.

Proverbs informs us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. So without the fear of God, we are all foolish. Last I'll conclude with this.

We need a deep appreciation and application for the gospel. Look with me in v. 33 again. And with great power, 433, the great power and the apostles were giving the testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Can you imagine three, four months earlier, everyone heard the news. This man died out on Golgotha's hill. His name was Jesus.

And he died. And now the apostles are saying, no, he appeared to us. He rose from the grave and this deep appreciation for the gospel.

[41 : 27] He died for sin. He rose from the grave. He lived the sinless life. He is ascended to the Father on high and that has a transforming effect. The gospel frees us from an addiction to ourselves.

It frees us to an addiction to stuff. It frees us from wanting to lie, to steal, to deceive. It causes us to be honest and it causes us to be generous.

Being overwhelmed that God condescended to earth and the person of Jesus, he was born. He lived sinlessly. He died sacrificially. He rose victoriously and he ascended to the heaven.

Amen. The gospel sets our minds on the glory that will be revealed one day. He is beautiful.

He is wonderful. He is worth living our lives for and being devoted to him. And may we do that as a body of Christ church and may there be no spiritual deception, spiritual hypocrisy to be named among us.

[42 : 35] Father, show us any habits of deception in our lives. We renounce any lies that we are using to make others think that we are more spiritual than we are.

Cleanness of all dishonesty helps us to walk in the light as you are in the light. May we use our mouths to speak of the things that which we know to be true, pure and lovely and that which

ultimately glorifies you.

And may what we say and do benefit others for your ultimate glory. We love you, Lord. We thank you for this account of Ananias and Sapphira.

Thank you for the sobering account and may it cause within us also a great fear, a fear of you. You are awesome in the truest sense of the word.

Amen.